CONFERENCE OF THE EIGHTEEN-NATION COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT

ENDC/PV.407
29 April 1969
ENGLISH

FINAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FOUR HUNDRED AND SEVENTH MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 29 April 1969, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. H. KHALLAF (United Arab Republic)

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PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Brazil:	Mr. S.A. FRAZAO
	Mr. L.F. PALMEIRA LAMPREIA
	Mr. J. NOGUEIRA FILHO
Bulgaria:	Mr. K. CHRISTOV
	Mr. M. KARASSIMEONOV
	Mr. I. PEINIRDJIEV
Burma:	U CHIT MYAING
	U KYAW MIN
Canada:	Mr. G. IGNATIEFF
	Mr. A.G. CAMPBELL
	Mr. J.R. MORDEN
Czechoslovakia:	Mr. T. LAHODA
	Mr. V. VAJNAR
	Mr. V. SAFAR
	Mr. J. STRUCKA
Ethiopia:	Mr. A. ZELLEKE
India:	Mr. M.A. HUSAIN
	Mr. N. KRISHNAN
	Mr. K.P. JAIN
Italy:	Mr. R. CARACCIOLO
	Mr. F. LUCIOLI OTTIERI
	Mr. R. BORSARELLI
	Mr. U. PESTALOZZA
Mexico:	Miss E. AGUIRRE
	Mr. H. CARDENAS RODRIGUEZ
Nigeria:	Alhaji SULE KOLO
	Mr. L.A. MALIKI

Poland:	Mr. H. JAROSZEK
	Mr. K. ZYBYLSKI
	Mr. H. STEPOSZ
	Mr. S. DAEROWA
Romania:	Mr. N. ECOBESCO
	Mr. V. CONSTANTINESCO
	Mr. V. TARZIORU
	Mr. C. GEORGESCO
Sweden:	Mr. A. EDELSTAM
	Mr. R. BOMAN
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics:	Mr. A.A. ROSHCHIN
	Mr. O.A. GRINEVSKY
	Mr. I.I. TCHEPROV
	Mr. N.S. KISHILOV
United Arab Republic:	Mr. H. KHALLAF
	Mr. O. SIRRY
	Mr. E.S. El REEDY
	Mr. Y. RIZK
United Kingdom:	Mr. I.F. PORTER
	Mr. W.N. HILLIER-FRY
United States of America:	Mr. A.S. FISHER
	Mr. C. GLEYSTEEN
	Mr. W. GIVAN
	Mr. R.L. McCORMACK
Special Representative of the Secretary-General:	Mr. D. PROTITCH
Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General:	Mr. W. EPSTEIN

1. The CHAIRMAN (United Arab Republic): I declare open the 407th plenary meeting of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament.

2. Mr. LAHODA (Czechoslovakia): In view of the fact that a number of delegations have dealt in their statements with the effectiveness of our work and have advanced ideas on methods for improving it, may I at the very beginning of my statement say a few words on that topic.

3. In the opinion of the delegation of Czechoslovakia, the best method is that which will enable us to reach the desired positive results speedily. The prerequisite for this is the readiness and good will to reach agreement on the questions under consideration. Also required is a matter-of-fact approach to our deliberations and an endeavour to reach mutually acceptable solutions of the issues that have been selected for consideration. We assume that all members of our Committee have this in mind. All that is necessary for us now is to concentrate our attention in that spirit on the solution of the principal tasks before us. We have all agreed that, apart from the demilitarization of the sea-bed and the ocean floor, which we have on the agenda for our informal meeting tomorrow, those tasks primarily include measures closely related to the problems of nuclear armament, and for that reason I should like to comment briefly on the underground test ban.

4. Much has been said on this subject both in this Committee and elsewhere. The debates we have had so far have helped to clarify many aspects of the problem and have presumably also contributed in substantial measure to the Swedish delegation's being in a position to submit on 1 April 1969 a complex, thoroughly considered, thought-provoking working paper (ENDC/242) with suggestions as to possible provisions of a treaty banning underground nuclear weapon tests. The Czechoslovak delegation welcomes that initiative as yet another proof of the constructive approach of the Swedish delegation not only to the negotiations on banning nuclear tests but also to the work of our Committee as a whole.

5. We also take into account that, following the prolonged discussions of the topic, it is now quite appropriate for us to start negotiating on the language of a treaty ensuring the fulfilment of this urgent demand to the fullest extent. We expect that discussions within that concrete framework should make it considerably easier to reach agreement on this pressing problem. The Swedish working paper is an important

(Mr. Lahoda, Czechoslovakia)

document deserving detailed examination from a number of viewpoints. It will undoubtedly be the subject of an extensive and fruitful exchange of views in our Committee. I should like to make some preliminary comments on certain questions dealt with in that document.

6. The paper is apparently based on the premise that agreement on the banning of underground nuclear weapon tests calls in the first place for a political decision to be taken by those States upon which agreement on that question primarily depends. This view fully conforms to the one that Czechoslovakia has held for a number of years. We particularly appreciate the fact that the Swedish paper calls for the complete prohibition of underground nuclear tests. It allows no exemptions, regardless of the grounds which might be used in an attempt to justify them. The paper deals in a relatively detailed manner with the provisions relating to control. As suggested, the control would offer adequate guarantees to all parties to the treaty that obligations ensuing from it would be fully observed by all States parties. At the same time the control provisions would not impose upon individual States commitments exceeding those necessitated by the need for adequate control.

7. It is also our view that the undertaking providing for the total banning of underground nuclear weapon tests, as well as the obligations and further measures relating to control, should be assumed by the States parties to the treaty themselves. International co-operation in the exchange of seismological data should make it considerably easier for the States parties to the treaty to evaluate individual seismic events. As is well known, Swedish scientists have been paying considerable attention to those questions for quite some time. They have indeed accomplished a great deal in that respect. We have always appreciated the readiness with which the Swedish delegation has acquainted us with their findings in the past years. We feel that the latest Swedish working paper is based on the solid grounds of ample factual material provided by contemporary scientific research. That particular section of the working paper requires rather thorough examination and the Czechoslovak delegation is still analysing it. However, our study would be greatly facilitated if the Swedish delegation could elaborate in some detail on certain ideas in its draft. We have in mind particularly a more detailed explanation of the interrelationship between the provisions of paragraphs 3 (b) and 3 (c) of article II and their relationship to paragraph 4 of that article.

(Mr. Lahoda, Czechoslovakia)

8. We regard the statement of the Soviet delegation concerning the willingness of the Soviet Union to participate in the proposed exchange of seismological data (ENDC/PV.402, para.72) as a positive step. We welcome the fact that the United Kingdom has adopted a similar stand in that respect (ENDC/PV.404, para. 13 et seq.). If international co-operation is to accomplish its purpose, the participation of the United States is of great importance. We should appreciate hearing the views of the United States delegation on that subject. As for Czechoslovakia, we also are ready to join in the proposed exchange of data. We trust that our participation would be a component which would appropriately fit into the over-all picture.

9. We also listened with great interest to the statement made by the representative of Canada, Ambassador Ignatieff, at our meeting on 17 April (ibid., paras. 75 et seq.). It contained a number of stimulating ideas concerning international co-operation in the exchange of seismological data. That aspect also should be thoroughly examined. It concerns the concept of various technical problems studied by experts in a number of countries for several years. Their accomplishments so far appear to justify the assumption that the solution of the concrete technical problems does not represent an insurmountable obstacle.

10. As for the possible measures to be taken by our Committee in that respect, we feel that the right time to consider them will be after reasonable progress has been achieved on the crux of the problem, namely, the political principles underlying the whole matter.

11. Before I conclude my intervention I should like, with the indulgence of the Committee, to comment briefly on one particular topic which has been the subject of reflection and comment for quite some time. As is well known, various unofficial suggestions have been made recently relating to the enlargement of the Eighteen-Nation Committee to enable a wider range of States to participate in the disarmament negotiations. It is argued that disarmament problems do not concern any closed circle of States but affect the vital interests of all States. The existence of the Eighteen-Nation Committee with its present composition does not, we believe, in any way deny the interest of all States of the international community in the solution of disarmament problems.

12. The setting up of the Committee gave expression to the fact that the optimum conditions for negotiations on any subject matter exist in a body which thanks to its political composition and the number of its members offers the best prospects for fruitful

(Mr. Lahoda, Czechoslovakia)

work. Those views were taken into account at the time the Committee was formed in 1961. This is true as regards both the size of the Committee and the careful political balance of its composition. An adequate representation of the individual regions of the world was also taken into consideration. The functioning of the Committee over a period of nine years may be regarded as evidence of the fact that those criteria were correct and that it is appropriate that they should also be observed at the present time.

13. All those aspects should, in our opinion, be taken into account when further prospects for disarmament negotiations, and within their framework, also the work of this Committee, are considered. We are ready to approach all ideas relating to that question with an open mind. As a matter of principle, however, we start from the premise that any decision to that end should consistently respect in particular the principle of equitable political balance that was applied at the time the Committee was formed.

14. Mr. IGNATIEFF (Canada): In my opening statement at the second meeting of our resumed session I argued that the key to progress towards ending the nuclear arms race, which is our priority objective, would be the bilateral talks on the limitation of strategic arms between the United States and the Soviet Union and that the most important related measures would be the comprehensive test ban and the cessation of the production of fissionable materials for weapons purposes (ENDC/PV.396, paras.53-60). I said that we attached high priority to the discussion of the comprehensive test ban and the cut-off and hoped that conditions would so develop that consideration could usefully be given to the terms in which agreements on those two matters might be drawn.

15. As I have listened to the statements of other members of the Committee, I have been struck by the number who have taken a broadly similar view of the priorities. Some maintained, as I did, that progress in the strategic arms talks, the comprehensive test ban and the cut-off are required to reinforce the non-proliferation Treaty (ENDC/226*) and ensure that it becomes and remains effective. Others valued those measures for their own sake as means for ending qualitatively and quantitatively the nuclear arms race. In any case, there seems to be a consensus in favour of pressing ahead to the extent possible on those two fronts. This is not surprising if we recall the existence of such documents as the joint memorandum on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons (ENDC/178) of August 1966

(Mr. Ignatieff, Canada)

which was submitted by eight non-aligned members and referred specifically to those two measures. At our meeting on 17 April (ENDC/PV.404, para.75 et seq.) I made some suggestions in connexion with a statement made previously by our Swedish colleague (ENDC/PV.399, paras. 7 et seq.) for forward movement towards a comprehensive test ban and have been gratified by the reactions of my colleagues. Today I should like to make some remarks about the cut-off, in part because it is a question which was relegated to the background during the negotiation of the non-proliferation Treaty and it is some time since the Canadian delegation has discussed it.

16. Indeed, the record shows that the last time the Canadian delegation addressed itself to the cut-off was about two years and 100 meetings ago. On 20 June 1967, General Burns argued (ENDC/PV.306, para.7) that the cessation of the production of fissionable materials for weapons purposes and the reconversion or transfer to peaceful purposes of present stockpiles would demonstrate that the nuclear Powers as well as the non-nuclear signatories of the non-proliferation Treaty were prepared to carry on the movement in the direction of the control of nuclear weapons and their eventual reduction and elimination. This surely remains an even more important consideration today than it was while the non-proliferation Treaty was still being negotiated. For it is hard to imagine anything more likely to speed up ratifications of the non-proliferation Treaty and its entry into force than evidence from this Committee that real progress is being made towards a comprehensive test ban and cut-off.

17. As we understood the rather negative attitude towards the cut-off on the part of the Soviet delegation in the past, it was based on the contention that such a measure would amount to "control without disarmament", and on the objection that the proposals regarding this measure would require revealing the location of plants producing fissionable materials, and opening them for inspection. It also was argued that the cut-off would not result in a significant reduction in nuclear arsenals. The Canadian delegation has drawn some encouragement from the absence from the statement of the Soviet representative at our meeting on 10 April (ENDC/PV.402, paras. 41 et seq.) of criticisms of the new United States proposal (ENDC/PV.401, paras. 7 and 8) that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards system be employed to verify compliance with a cut-off. However, that encouragement was somewhat offset by our concern at the repetition of some of the other old arguments against this important measure.

(Mr. Ignatieff, Canada)

18. First of all, I should like to make clear the importance the Canadian delegation attaches to the change in the United States position with regard to verification of compliance with a cut-off which was announced by the United States representative at our 401st meeting on 8 April. Not that we regarded the previous United States attitude as unreasonable: on the contrary, the inspection system outlined in the working papers presented by the United States delegation to this Committee in 1964 and 1966 (ENDC/134, 172, 174 and 176 and Corr.1) impressed us as being neither burdensome nor unduly intrusive. Rather, it is because we share the view expressed by the United States representative (ENDC/PV.401, para. 15) that when the non-proliferation Treaty comes into effect the nuclear-weapon Powers should be prepared to accept, in the context of a cut-off agreement, the same safeguards on their fissionable materials production and their production facilities as are appropriate to verify non-proliferation on the part of the non-nuclear-weapon States.

19. In this connexion I would recall that the fact that the non-proliferation Treaty discriminates between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States, with respect to the imposition of safeguards, has been the basis for considerable criticism of the Treaty. Moreover, that criticism has only in part been met by the voluntary acceptance on the part of the United Kingdom and the United States of IAEA safeguards on their non-military nuclear installations. A further arms control measure involving acceptance by the nuclear-weapon States, in respect of all their nuclear activities, of all safeguards they have called on other States to accept would remove this much-exploited argument against the non-proliferation Treaty. The voluntary acceptance of IAEA safeguards on their non-military nuclear installations by the nuclear Powers would indeed be one of the most valuable contributions towards establishing confidence between nuclear and non-nuclear Powers and sanity in the atomic age.

20. It has been argued against the cut-off that its adoption would not lead to the reduction of existing arsenals and would not restrict the further production of nuclear weapons. I would recall that this is precisely one of the arguments which opponents of the non-proliferation Treaty use to justify their refusal to sign that Treaty. It is an argument that can be used against the outer space Treaty (General

(Mr. Ignatieff, Canada)

Assembly resolution 2222 (XXI) annex), the Antarctic Treaty[1/] and the partial test-ban Treaty (ENDC/100/Rev.1). Moreover, similar allegations can be made against the draft treaty on the sea-bed (ENDC/240) which was submitted by the Soviet representative at our 395th meeting on 18 March. It would also apply to a comprehensive test ban. These are all preventive measures necessary to arrest the arms race before the process of reduction and elimination can gather momentum. Nor in the end is the argument completely accurate as far as the cut-off is concerned. The United States has made the offer (A/PV.1334, paras. 74-75) to couple an agreement on the cut-off with an agreement to transfer to peaceful uses an agreed amount of fissionable material -- that is 60,000 kilograms for the United States and 40,000 kilograms for the Soviet Union. The representative of the United States made the point most clearly when he said at our meeting of 11 August 1966:

> "We have also indicated our willingness to have ... 100,000 kilogrammes of U-235 taken from existing nuclear weapons. There would thus be destroyed thousands of nuclear weapons." (ENDC/PV.281, p.16)

21. The same can be said with respect to the objection that the cut-off "would not solve the problem of eliminating or reducing the threat of a nuclear war" (ENDC/PV.402, para. 77). None of the treaties I have just mentioned nor either of the drafts now before us was intended to solve that problem. They are designed for other purposes which are, however, related to the problem of eliminating or reducing the threat of nuclear war and providing in all cases, unlike some other proposed measures, the means of verification to ensure that their provisions are respected.

22. The Canadian Government, like the Governments of all members of this Committee, would be only too pleased if it were possible today to solve the problem of eliminating or reducing the threat of nuclear war. However, the possibilities of achieving at least the aim of eliminating the threat of nuclear war, except in the framework of general and complete disarmament, do not seem very great. We hope that measures which will reduce the threat will soon become possible.

1/ United Nations Treaty Series, vol.402, pp. 71 et seq.

(Mr. Ignatieff, Canada)

23. Meanwhile measures have been adopted, and proposals for others are before us, which aim at preventing the growth of the threat of nuclear war. In our view the cut-off forms an essential part of this pattern of prevention. Moreover, as a practical matter, the rearrangements in national nuclear programmes for ending the programmes for the supply of nuclear materials for weapons production would be likely to involve considerable time. If the principle of the cut-off could be accepted, even though final action cannot at present be taken, some interim steps might be initiated towards phasing out some aspects of military production. Those with longer service than I around this table will recognize that I am reverting to the constructive ideas put forward by the representative of Sweden at the meeting of the Committee on 11 August 1966, when she suggested proceeding in the first place by way of freezing production of nuclear weapon materials and developing to a gradual phasing out (ENDC/PV.281, pp.4-5). I have no doubt that if the Committee were to study closely the possibilities of making progress towards a cut-off we should be able to identify preparatory action which could usefully be taken at this stage. By doing this it would be possible to reflect in our report to the twenty-fourth session of the United Nations General Assembly the seriousness with which the Committee approached this along with other measures related to the cessation of the nuclear arms race.

24. Miss AGUIRRE (Mexico) (translation from Spanish): I merely wish to make a brief statement in order to inform this Committee, on the instructions of my Government, that in view of the fact that the Ministry of External Affairs of Mexico received on 25 April 1969 a declaration by the Government of Barbados which will be annexed to its instrument of ratification of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (ENDC/186), and whereby the said Government waives all the requirements laid down in article 28, paragraph 1 of the Treaty itself, the number of signatory States for which the Treaty is now fully in force has risen to eleven.

25. For this reason, and in application of paragraph 3 of that same article 28, my Government has already asked the ten other countries which, besides Mexico, are parties to the Treaty — namely, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, Uruguay, Honduras, Nicaragua, Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, Paraguay and Barbados -- whether they agree that the preliminary meeting provided for in the Treaty in order that the agency for the prohibition of nuclear weapons in Latin America may be set up and commence its work

(Miss Aguirre, Mexico)

should begin on Tuesday, 24 June 1969, in Mexico City, which will be the headquarters of the agency, as stipulated in the Treaty.

26. The CHAIRMAN (United Arab Republic): I am sure that I reflect the views of all the members of this Conference in congratulating Latin America, and in particular Mexico, on the coming into force of the Treaty of Tlatelolco (ENDC/186). This is a momentous step towards realizing the aims which all of us here seek to achieve.

27. Mr. FISHER (United States of America): We are all happy to hear, from the statement of the representative of Mexico, that on 25 April the world took another step towards the control of nuclear weapons. We are happy to note that on that date Barbados became the twelfth country to deposit its instrument of ratification of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (ENDC/186) and the eleventh to do so with a waiver of all other requirements for entry into force. It now becomes possible for those eleven States to meet together for the purpose of establishing the agency that will administer this Treaty. The United States is gratified to hear that a definite date has been set for that meeting.

28. The United States took great satisfaction in April 1968 in signing Additional Protocol II to this Treaty, thereby signifying its intention to respect the denuclearization of Latin America. I note that the United Kingdom also has signed that Protocol and I hope that other nuclear Powers may be able to sign the Protocol in the future.

29. The United States has followed closely the progress of our Latin American friends and neighbours along the road towards the permanent prohibition of nuclear weapons from their respective territories. We now applaud this most recent development and shall watch with keen interest as the Treaty's international agency takes form. That agency will be dealing with matters, such as verification, which lie at the heart of nuclear arms control. Accordingly its success in dealing with such matters will be instructive to us all.

30. The CHAIRMAN (United Arab Republic): Before proceeding to read the communiqué I wish to tell the Committee that the co-Chairmen understand that no delegation has asked to speak on 1 May 1969 and in view of that fact they recommend that the next formal meeting of the Committee be held on Tuesday, 6 May 1969.

It was so decided.

The Conference decided to issue the following communiqué:

"The Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament today held its 407th plenary meeting in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, under the chairmanship of H.E. Ambassador H. Khallaf, representative of the United Arab Republic.

"Statements were made by the representatives of Czechoslovakia, Canada and Mexico, by the Chairman and by the representative of the United States of America.

"The next meeting of the Conference will be held on Tuesday, 6 May 1969, at 10.30 a.m."

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.